

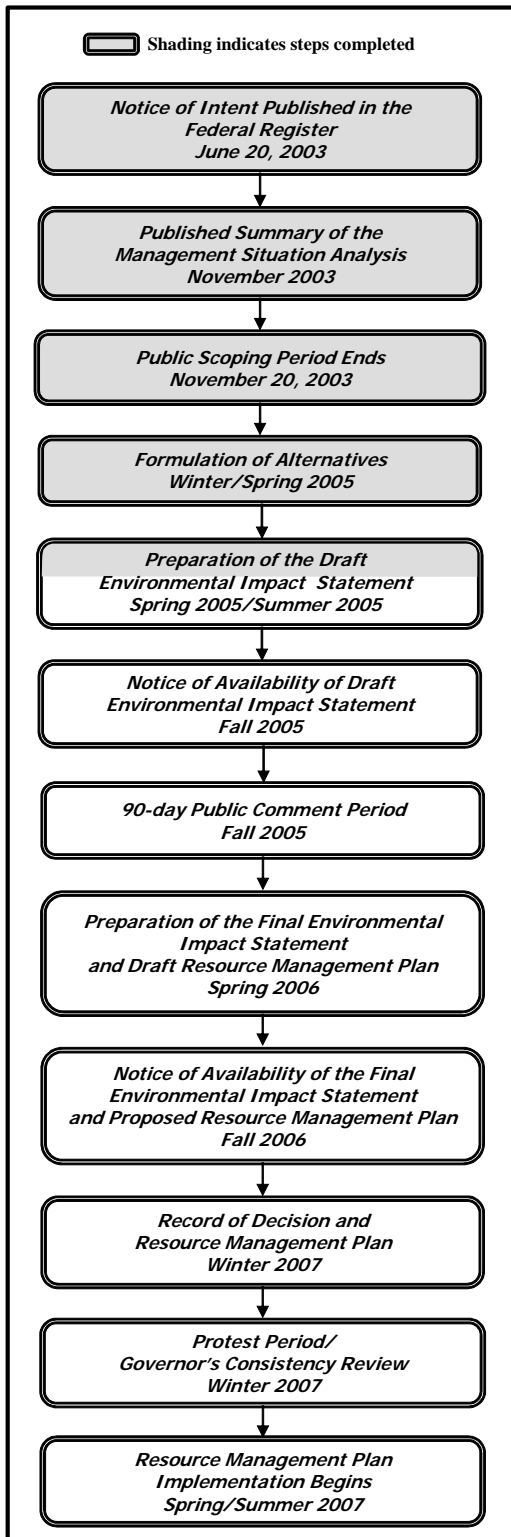


Casper Resource Management Plan Revision Newsletter

2987 Prospector Drive, Casper, WY 82604-2968
(307) 261-7600 www.blm.gov/rmp/casper

March 2005

Where do we go from here?



Letter from the Field Manager

Dear Friends,

Thanks for your continued participation in the Casper Resource Management Plan Revision (RMP Revision) process. During 2004, BLM continued to meet with our cooperators on preparation of the RMP Revision. We made excellent progress with the associated environmental impact statement (EIS) being prepared in support of the RMP Revision. Four alternatives and a preferred alternative have been developed and will be presented in a Draft EIS.

What's Next?

This is the second newsletter in a series designed to provide you with information on what is happening in the Casper RMP Revision process. These newsletters should keep you current on issues and events.

Currently, we are preparing a Draft EIS which contains an analysis of each alternative to determine the potential impacts on the environment and management of public lands in the planning area. The Draft EIS is scheduled for publication this fall. Following publication of the Draft EIS, there will be another series of public meetings as well as a 90-day review and public comment period. After careful consideration of your comments, a Final EIS and proposed RMP will be published in the fall of 2006.

When completed, the RMP will provide a set of comprehensive, long-range decisions for 1) managing resources throughout the planning area and 2) identifying uses or allocations allowed on the public land surface and mineral estate administered by the BLM.

A successful RMP Revision depends on your involvement. Watch for the Draft EIS coming this fall. I encourage you to review the document, attend the public meetings, and submit your comments.

Jim Murkin, Casper Field Office Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Casper Field Office

Purpose of the Resource Management Plan Revision

The purpose of the RMP Revision and associated EIS is to replace the existing 1985 Platte River RMP. Emerging resource issues and changing laws necessitate the revision. In general, the Casper RMP Revision will do two things: 1) provide an overview of goals, objectives, and needs associated with public land management; and 2) resolve multiple-use conflicts or issues driving the preparation of the RMP Revision.

The EIS will do three things: 1) present a number of alternatives, including a “no action” alternative and a preferred alternative; 2) detail different approaches to addressing and resolving planning issues; and 3) analyze the effects of each of the alternatives.

Issue Identification and Initiation of Public Involvement

The scoping process began on June 20, 2003 when a Notice of Intent (NOI) to revise the Platte River RMP and prepare a supporting EIS was published in the *Federal Register*. The NOI identified the preliminary planning issues and criteria. BLM staff reviewed the issues identified during scoping and collected pertinent resource information for the planning area (see Final Summary of the Management Situation Analysis November 2003 and Final Scoping Report January 2004).

Collaboration with Cooperating Agencies

The BLM invited local government entities and other federal agencies to participate as cooperating agencies in the planning process because they either had jurisdiction by law or could offer special expertise on economic, social, and local interests, and values.

Those agencies accepting cooperating agency status worked with the BLM Interdisciplinary (ID) Team during a series of workshops to develop a reasonable range of alternatives.

Alternatives to be Considered in Detail

Initially, four alternatives (Alternatives A through D) were developed. Each alternative provides a different emphasis for managing the public lands and resources within the planning area and represents a complete and reasonable land use plan.

Alternative A, the No Action Alternative, is the continuation of current management direction. This alternative uses decisions from existing planning documents as well as new policy direction while maintaining existing land allocations. Alternatives B, C, and D were developed with input from the cooperators and the BLM ID Team. These alternatives express 1) desired outcomes or desired future conditions in terms of specific goals, standards, and objectives; and 2) uses or allocations allowable on the public land surface and mineral estate.

These four alternatives range from a resource conservation alternative to a resource development alternative. Each alternative has been designed to meet the RMP management goals. The alternatives differ in how fast the management goal is met, the degree to which it will be met, the priorities within resource programs, and the emphasis placed on different resource management actions.

Selection of the Preferred Alternative

As required by BLM’s planning guidance, a preferred alternative, Alternative E, has been selected and is presented in the Draft EIS for comparison with the other alternatives. While it is called the preferred alternative, it is provided to allow the BLM and its partners to focus on the consequences of each alternative and whether the RMP Revision is headed in the right direction. A final RMP decision will not be made until after public outreach is conducted during the 90-day comment period following publication of the Draft EIS.



Casper's Workshop #3

RMP Revision and Draft EIS Alternatives

Alternative A – Continuation of Current Management (No-Action). Continues the existing management and uses of public lands and resources at present projected levels.

Alternative B – Conservative Development and Emphasis on Resource Conservation. Emphasizes conservation of natural and cultural resources to a greater extent than Alternative A.

Alternative C – Balanced Resource Development and Conservation. Provides natural resource management and conservation similar to that under Alternative A. Protection and conservation of natural and cultural resources are more balanced and allow for acceptable levels of resource development.

Alternative D – Increased Resource Development and Moderate Conservation. Emphasizes resource development. Conservation of environmental and cultural resources would be provided but major emphasis is on resource development.

Alternative E – Enhanced Resource Development and Conservation (Preferred Alternative). Allows for resource use with more emphasis on protection of the natural resources than alternatives A, C, or D. Alternative E consists of a combination of management actions from Alternatives A through D.

Special Designations

During the land use planning process, determinations are made for whether specific public lands warrant designation as special management areas (SMAs), such as areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs). ACECs are areas where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important resources and resource values, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.

Preliminary Schedule for the Draft EIS

After the Draft EIS is completed this fall, a Notice of Availability (NOA) will be published in the *Federal Register*. The NOA will announce the availability of the document and initiate the formal public review and 90-day comment period. Comments received on the Draft EIS from tribal, state, and local governments, other federal agencies, and the public will be used to prepare the Final EIS and proposed RMP.

Opportunities for Public Involvement

There are three opportunities for public involvement: the RMP Revision website, the 90-day public comment period, and the public mailing list.

1. Casper RMP Revision Website

The RMP revision website is regularly updated with information, documents, and announcements. We encourage you to submit your concerns electronically via the comment link at www.blm.gov/rmp/casper.

2. 90-Day Public Comment Period

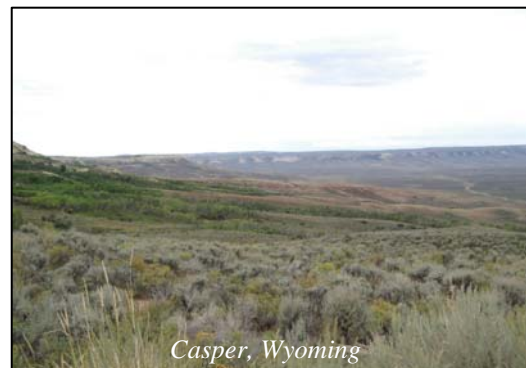
The next public comment period will begin with the publication of the NOA of the Draft EIS in the *Federal Register*. The NOA is scheduled to be published this fall. BLM encourages your participation. For more information on how to obtain a copy of the Draft EIS refer to the last page of this newsletter.

3. Public Mailing List

If you are already receiving information about the Casper RMP Revision, you will remain on the mailing list. If you would like to be added or deleted from the mailing list you may do so by contacting Linda Slone at: (307) 261-7600, email Linda.Slone@blm.gov, or by mailing the request to 2987 Prospector Drive, Casper WY 82604-2968.

Existing and Proposed ACECs and SMAs under consideration in the planning process:

- ✓ North Platte River ACEC/SMA
- ✓ South Bighorn/Redwall ACEC/SMA
- ✓ Alcova Fossil Area ACEC/SMA
- ✓ Black-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC
- ✓ Salt Creek Hazardous ACEC
- ✓ Cedar Ridge ACEC/SMA
- ✓ Jackson Canyon ACEC
- ✓ Muddy Mountain EEA
- ✓ Goldeneye Recreation Area
- ✓ Wind River Proposed SMA
- ✓ Salt Creek SMA
- ✓ Sand Hills SMA
- ✓ Bates Hole SMA



Looking Ahead to the Casper Resource Management Plan Revision and Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Over the next few months the BLM will be preparing the Draft EIS. This is your opportunity to let us know whether you would like to have a copy of this document, which provides background on the project and presents the potential impacts of five alternatives.

The Draft EIS will be released this fall. You may request a copy of the document on the Casper RMP Revision website or mail in the attached form. Requests should be received before **July 1, 2005**.

Linda Slone
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I would like to receive a copy of the Draft EIS. Please send me the Draft EIS as follows.

☐ I would like to be notified by email that the Draft EIS is on the Casper RMP Revision website

☐ Mail me a CD (preferred method of delivery)

☐ Mail me a hardcopy of the Draft EIS

Please print legibly and preferably in ink.

First Name

Last Name

Title

Organization/Agency

Address

City

State

Zip

Email

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